1:Beals E-5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

[p. 2-b]

his aunt, Doña Feliciana Bautista, and his uncle, Don Antonio Sánchez. Agustín also afforded fascinating data himself, as we were able to observe closely the process of his assimilation into the culture and life of the community. In the course of the study, he changed from a not untypical United States high school graduate into a pretty typical resident of Cherán.

A particular debt of gratitude is also due Pedro Chávez. A native of Cherán, Sr. Chávez had been educated in a Government boarding school and was serving as a school teacher. Owing to the lack of facilities, he was able to teach only at night, and he spent his days aiding in the investigation, without compensation. No amount of pay could have secured more conscientious and faithful aid, day after day for many months. Regardless of the weather, or, I suspect, very often regardless of his personal concerns, Sr. Chávez either worked as systematic informant or accompanied one or the other of the investigators on endless visits, opening many doors to them which otherwise would have been closed. When not actively assisting, he wrote lengthy accounts of various phases of town life. A person of some eminence in the town, as well as belonging to the dominant political group, he had served as town Treasurer and was a member of the committee which administered the town's forest lands.

The hundreds of Cherán residents who aided us at one time or another cannot, of course, be listed. Many gave long hours of their time and courteous and intelligent aid on numerous problems. Essentially, this report is their report and the outsiders acted primarily as guides, recorders, and interpreters. That the people of Cherán were willing to do this was due partly to the unreserved cooperation of the municipal authorities who endorsed the study on every occasion. I am also indebted to the Executive Authority of the State of Michoacán for providing me with the proper introduction to the town.

A word should be said about field methods at this point. Obviously, working with a large group of investigators presents special problems. Perhaps the most important special technique was to arrange to have all field notes transcribed at the earliest possible moment.

126 Usually, field notes were classified, typed in triplicate, and filed according to a modification of the system of the Outline of Cultural Materials prepared by George P. Murdock and others for use in the Cross-Cultural Survey at Yale University (Murdock and others, 1938). In this way it was possible for all workers to find immediately what had already been collected on a subject and to discover discrepancies in accounts when these existed. The system also served to show deficiencies in the data.

Certain other problems in field methods arose. 123 Cherán habits place some obstacles in the way of field work. The main occupations of the town are farming and forest exploitation. In [512] the former case, men are usually in the fields all day, often at points several miles distant from town. In the latter instance, men may be away from town for 4 or 5 days at a time. In certain seasons the town is almost deserted during the day. As women will not talk with strange men [609] in the absence of their husbands, it often took many visits to find at home a man we wished to query on some specific point. In addition, yards are surrounded by high walls and it is customary to greet visitors at the yard gate and converse with them on the street. Consequently, it is difficult to gain much insight into home life. Only women can get free access into the houses, and it is unfortunate that Sra. Rendón could not have spent full time in the field. Certain aspects of this study would then have been much better than they are.

In general, the method followed was first to discuss a topic with Sr. Chávez in detail, obtaining from him as complete an account as possible. In some cases Sr. Chávez also wrote supplementary accounts. Efforts were always made to get the names of specific people who were involved. Once we had obtained what might be considered Sr. Chávez's view of a particular aspect of the culture, this was sometimes checked with Sr. Rangel. On other occasions we started with Sr. Rangel and checked with Sr. Chávez. An effort was then made to visit and talk with a large number of the people concerned. For example, after securing Sr. Chávez' account of childbirth, a list of all the professional midwives in town was secured. These were all then visited by Dr. Palacios and interviewed intensively. Some were inter-

1:Beals E -5 (1940-1941)1946 NU34 Tarasco NU34
[9,1446]

796
535 gold braid and ornaments. Underneath is worn an ordinary pair of cotton *calzones*. The lower part of the legs is wrapped in cloth to represent leggings. A richly decorated velvet cape is worn over the shoulders, with gold braid and fringe about the edges and gilt ornaments and often small mirrors scattered profusely over the rest of the cape. Underneath is worn a bright-colored rayon shirt.

The headdress is a complicated crown of split cane with a number of upright pieces a foot or more in height. The crown and uprights are decorated in brightly colored papers, feathers, and bright ornaments, including small mirrors. The face is almost covered with a bright rayon kerchief. Shoes are worn. A pair of spurs, with very large metal disks in place of the rowels, completes the costume. The trousers, cape, and headdress are usually rented for the occasion by the commissioner. The rest of the costume is purchased and presented to the dancer by the commissioner.

The *moros* parade about on their horses a good deal and also dance, especially at the stores and *cantinas*, where they are given small presents, cookies, cigarettes, money, or drinks. They usually dance singly or in pairs. The steps are simple shuffling steps designed to give as many opportunities to clash the spurs together as possible. The figures of the dance are not well defined but appear related to European country dances. Realizing from previous experience that without skill in choreographic description (and being unable to witness the dances closely), attempts to record steps and figures are of little value, the writer made no effort to secure details.

[126]

THE NEGRITOS

The *negritos*, turí'a, appear in connection with the *mayordomía* of the Holy Child, December 25. The brothers and relatives of the *carguero* invite people to dance. Persons who accept give a promise and have to appear. Thirty to thirty-five unmarried young men or boys are sought, "alert people, good learners, who can read." Also, anyone who wishes may volunteer. In addition to the young men, four little girls participate. Each dancer picks a godmother, who is known as the koroníče.

[883]

10:Beals & Hatcher E-4,5 (1941-1942) 1943
NU34 Tarasco NU34
Sierra Tarascans

The village of Cherán is primarily an agricultural village, at an elevation of approximately 8500 feet, in the mountains between Pátzcuaro and Uruapan, Michoacán, México. The climate consequently is temperate. In comparison with other villages of the region, Cherán is relatively prosperous and it is probable that the diet is better than in the majority of Tarascan towns. In terms of Tarascan standards, probably only between ten and twenty percent of the population is to be classed as "poor". On the other hand, there are no markedly wealthy families.

Three methods of collecting data were used. One, followed primarily by Sra. Rendón, was the collection of a complete list of foods eaten and the compilation of a large number of menus of actual meals for as many families as was possible. In addition, the entire staff collected recipes for specific dishes. These, although of ethnographic interest, were of little use in the present study. Finally, the cooperation of a number of literate families was enlisted to get a complete record of the food consumed over a fifteen day period.

The final method naturally was the most valuable. Unfortunately, the number of cooperating families was small. Moreover, the accuracy of the returns probably varied considerably. In many cases, the amount of money spent was given rather than the quantity purchased but, as very detailed studies of prices had been made it was possible to equate prices and quantities with some accuracy. One considerable source of error is the amount of vegetables such as cabbage, greens, and so on gathered from gardens or from woods. In addition, a certain amount of fruit or "snacks", purchased in the market or from street vendors had to be estimated from knowledge of general habits. The most specific records covered only a period in the late Fall and do not take into account some slight seasonal variations in the diet. Despite all these deficiencies, the various types of data seem to point to the same general conclusions, and we believe that these are reasonably valid, if the specific results are viewed with proper reserve.

An average weekly diet for a Cherán adult is presented in table I.[2]

in 1941-1942. The study formed a part of the Program of Anthropological Investigations among the Tarascan Indians, a joint enterprise of the University of California, the Escuela Nacional de Antropología, the Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, and the Departamento de Asuntos Indígenas. Analysis of the data was made by the junior author, Evelyn Hatcher.

[2] In compiling the tables, the following sources were used: Chatfield and Adams, **Proximate Composition of American Food Materials**, United States Department of Agriculture Circular N° 549, 1940: Chatfield and McLaughlin, **Proximate Composition of Fresh Fruits**, United States Depart-

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
NU34 Tarasco NU34

prevented the Tarascans from helping Montezuma when he sought additional support against Cortez. Consequently, the Spaniards were able to conquer the Aztec and Tarascan empires separately.

In the legends will be found specific references to some of these historic events and to places located on the accompanying maps (Figs. 1-2). These tales explain some of the natural features of the Tarascan countryside. Frequently, political history is combined with natural history.

Except for references to the four cardinal directions in the first legend and to omens and dreams predicting the coming of the Spaniards in the last two tales, there is no similarity between these Tarascan legends and those of other Indian groups of Mexico.

COLLECTION OF THE LEGENDS

The Tarascan legends and folk tales presented in this paper are a select few of those secured in 1953 by the author and his wife while he was Visiting Professor of History at the University of Michoacán in Morelia, Mexico. They were collected in the villages of Indians who still use the pre-Conquest language and speak of themselves as *Purépecha* rather than as Tarascans.

The etymology of the word "Tarascan" is disputed. The traditional explanation, probably correct, is that the conquistadores took Indian women as wives or concubines and were called *Tarascué* (son-in-law) by the fathers of the girls. Thinking that the term was the name of the tribe, the Spaniards referred to all as *Tarascos* (Foster, 1948, p. 9).

The legend of creation was told in the barrio of Santa Maria in Morelia by Ignacia Peña, a full-blooded Tarascan *serviente* (housemaid) with a third-grade education; the story of the tribal journey to Michoacán was given in Copula by Luis Espinosa, a meztizo with a secondary education, who specializes in pottery making; the tale of Tacamba was told by Fidelia Perez, a full-blooded Tarascan woman with no formal education, in the pueblo of San Gerónimo on the northern shore of Lake Pátzcuaro; the legend of Lake Cuitzeo was a collective effort by several natives

11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
NU34 Tarasco NU34

of the town of Cuitzeo; the other stories were told by Manuel Valenzuela, a former guide around Tzintzuntzan, in his uniquely exciting, urbane style.

Told and retold for generations in their native tongue, these tales were rendered orally in the Spanish of the region and translated into English by the author.

The stories have a continuity dating back to the sixteenth century (Ruiz, 1940). The exact phraseology varies with the individual

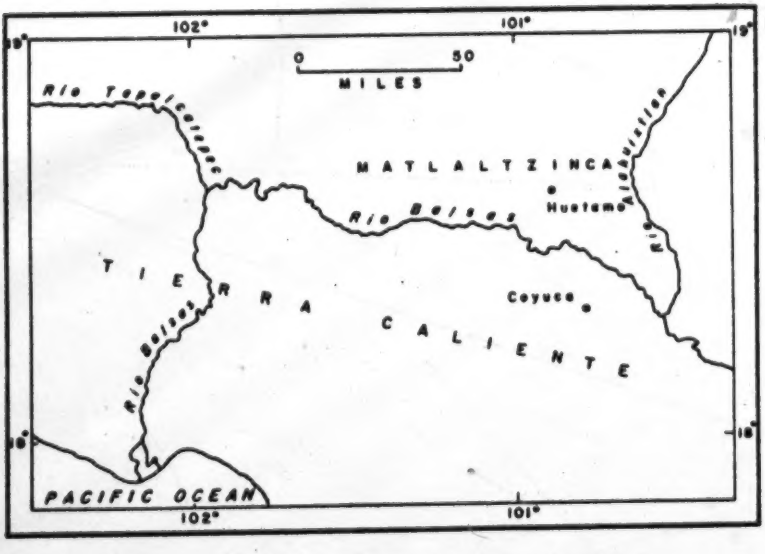

Fig. 2. Map of the Tierra Caliente of Michoacán

narrator, and his rendition usually conforms to the peculiar orientation given by his native pueblo. Some of these legends were published in Spanish by Ruiz in 1940, but this presentation represents their first appearance in English. The Ruiz versions are more elaborate than those presented herein and thereby form an interesting comparison.